

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

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CHAPTER EIGHT

The Seventh Seal: The First Four of the Seven Trumpets

Revelation 8:1:

1. And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

In this chapter, the opening of the seals is resumed. The seventh seal, from which the seven trumpets come, is removed from the seven-sealed book. The seventh seal includes all that happens during the sounding of the seven trumpets, and also the pouring out of the seven vials, and extends down to the time when the Millennium is ushered in. Let me illustrate what I mean: I am sure on the fourth of July, you have seen a rocket fired into the air. The rocket bursts into seven small rockets, and these seven burst into seven other small rockets. In our Scripture, the seventh seal includes the seven trumpets, and the seventh trumpet includes the seven vials. Three woes are also included. It is very significant that Heaven was silent for the space of half an hour when the seventh seal was broken; and yet, when you read what occurs during the seven trumpets and the seven vials, you do not wonder that all Heaven stood speechless when this terrible judgment was revealed. It is certainly noteworthy that the Spirit directed seven messages to seven churches. The book John saw in the hand of Him who sat upon the throne . . . the book containing the terms of the redemption of earth . . . was sealed with seven seals. Beneath the seven seals were seven trumpets. Chapters 12 and 13 reveal to us seven personages: the sun-clothed woman, the dragon, the manchild, the archangel, the Jewish remnant, the beast out of the sea and the beast out of the earth.

In chapters 15 and 16 we read of seven vials filled with the wrath of God and poured out upon the inhabitants of the earth. In chapters 17, 18, 19 and 20 we read of seven dooms: the doom of ecclesiastical Babylon, the doom of commercial Babylon, the doom of the Beast and the False Prophet, the doom of the Antichrist nations, the doom of Gog and Magog, the doom of Satan, and the eternal doom of the wicked dead. After the seven horrible dooms, we have seven wonderful new things. Revelation 21 and 22 tell us about the new Heaven, the new earth, the Pearly white City, the new nations, the new river, the new tree of life, the new throne. All seven of these glorious new things will continue throughout the ages of ages: “**Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end**” (Isaiah 9:7).

Seven is God's number . . . the Bible number of perfection. In the book of Revelation we have the account of God bringing to a close the affairs of man. God will make a perfect end to all sin, sorrow, unrighteousness and unrest. He will deliver the whole creation from the curse which was brought upon it by the sin of Adam (Romans 8:22). What the first Adam lost through disobedience to God's command, the second Adam purchased back through obedience and death on the cross.

Revelation 8:1 gives us the record of the opening of the seventh seal. When that seal is removed, there is silence in Heaven. Something gigantic, ghastly, unheard of . . . something heretofore unseen . . . happens.

When the seventh seal is opened, the seven trumpets begin to sound. All the terrible judgments of the trumpets are hidden beneath the seventh seal, and the seven vials of the wrath of God are also there. If you will read Revelation chapters 8 through 16, you will not be surprised that all Heaven stood aghast - completely silent, Speechless, and spellbound - for half an hour!

The four and twenty elders ceased to play their harps. Heaven's angels hushed their singing. Cherubim and Seraphim ceased to praise God. The host of Heaven stood in awe. Think, beloved! Think of Heaven standing in complete silence for the space of half an hour! Can you imagine the judgments of misery, blood and woe poured out upon mankind, so terrible that the very sight of those judgments renders all Heaven speechless and silent? God pity those who will be here upon this earth when the seventh seal is removed! Will you be here? If you are not born again, you may be. But you can be saved this moment if you will only believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour (Acts 16:31, Romans 10:9, John 5:24).

Will you, dear reader, be one to experience the horrible sights as you go through the indescribable judgments of God that will come about when the seventh seal is removed? God grant that you will not.

Let me illustrate:

Not long ago a drunk driver ran into the automobile just ahead of me. The driver and two others were killed instantly. In a matter of moments a great crowd gathered. Lying there on the road were the battered, broken, bleeding, twisted bodies of three men . . . three dead bodies.

At least a hundred people gathered quickly. The crowd moved about the wreckage and gazed upon the dead bodies in silence. You could have heard a pin drop. Those who spoke did so in a whisper. In the distance could be heard the screaming of the sirens as the ambulance came to the scene of the tragedy. As the dead were covered with sheets and lifted into the ambulance, the silence was deadly. People seemed to hold their breath. In some very, very small way, that bloody tragedy that rendered me speechless as I looked upon it, illustrates the tragedy that will occur when the judgments of God are poured out upon the wicked during the last half of the Great Tribulation period.

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

Revelation 8:2-6:

- 2. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.**
- 3. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.**
- 4. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.**
- 5. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.**
- 6. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.**

In verse 2, seven angels stood before God. These are special angels. Not all angels are said to stand before God. Gabriel stood before God (Luke 1:19). There were SEVEN of these angels - not six, not eight - but seven, representing the full power of God in judicial judgment.

They stood before God to pour out God's wrath upon His enemies. Seven trumpets were given to the angels. Trumpets are used to call soldiers to war. They are used in worship, for the convocation, to proclaim festivals such as the year of Jubilee, the Feast of the Tabernacles - and for judgments. Read Exodus 19:6, Amos 3:6, Joshua 6:13-16 and Zephaniah 1:14-16.

The seven angels received the trumpets, took their Positions as directed, and prepared to sound. But before the sounding of the trumpets, John saw another angel With a golden censer in his hand, and he came and stood before the golden incense altar. We are told that this angel was given much incense, and that he offered the incense with the prayers of "**all saints.**"

These saints were the saints of the Tribulation period. The smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. The angel took a censer and filled it with fire taken from the altar, and cast it into the earth. When the fire was cast into the earth, there were voices, thunderings, lightnings, and a great earthquake. The silence was broken. If you will notice, the same four things happen when the seventh trumpet sounds (Revelation 11:19) and also when the seventh vial is poured out. All end alike.

In verse 3 we read, "**Another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer . . .**" "The service rendered by the other angel at the altar proves that it could be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the High Priest.

Both the brazen and the golden altars are mentioned here. No ordinary creature could add to the prayers of the saints. The action of this other angel is of a mediatorial nature . . . One who is between the suffering, praying saints on earth and their God. There is "**one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus**" (I Timothy 2:5).

Therefore, we conclude that this angel could be none other than the Lord Jesus Himself. The term "**another angel**" is mentioned three times in Revelation - first in chapter 8:3, second in chapter 10:1, third in chapter 18:1.

In Joshua 5:13-15 the Lord appears in the form of a man to defend and fight for God's people. Read the account carefully and you will see that the greatest Commander in Chief of any army that ever fought was none other than the angel of the Lord - Christ Jesus Himself. In our present Scripture the "**other angel**" stood at the altar of the burnt offering which stood in the court of the tabernacle of Israel (Leviticus 9:24 ff). The fire was lit by God Himself, and afterwards kept burning by the daily sacrifices offered there.

Remember, the promises on earth are to God's chosen people, Israel. We, the Bride of Christ, will reign with Jesus over the restored Paradise on earth. God's people Israel are an earthly people with earthly promises. The Bride is a heavenly people with heavenly promises. This altar is mentioned six times in Revelation:

Chapter 6:9, chapter 8:3, chapter 8:5, chapter 11:1, chapter 14:18, chapter 16:7. In Hebrews 9:4 we are told that the censer used at the altar was made of gold, and was used to carry the fire from the brazen altar (Hebrews 9:1-10, Leviticus chapter 16).

Verse 3 continues by saying, "**Much incense was given the other angel,**" and he offered it with the prayers of the saints. The incense was to be offered on the golden altar before the throne.

The question is, who ARE these saints? Why are they praying? It does not seem reasonable to suppose that these are the saints that make up the Bride of Christ . . . those of us who are members of the True Church. At the time of the removing of the seventh seal, the Church will be in Heaven, having been raptured before this time of terrible judgment.

The Church is raptured at the beginning of chapter four, and at the time of Revelation 8:3 will have been with Jesus in the clouds in the air for several months. These "**all saints**" are the converts of the 144,000 sealed messengers of God, about whom we studied in Revelation 7. They are a part of the great multitude which no man could number.

They are praying because they are going through hell on earth under the mighty hand of the rider of the white horse of Revelation 6:1. We are not told what their prayers are, but no doubt their general burden will be for deliverance and judgment on their ungodly oppressors. God answers their prayers by pouring out unheard of judgment upon the peoples of the earth. God deals again with His people Israel as He dealt with them in the days of old in the case of Joshua and the battle of Jericho. The incense used in the tabernacle service was composed of four ingredients. Read Exodus 30:34-38. These four ingredients represent Christ, just as the four Gospels speak of Him from four points of view. The divine fire of God was needed to bring out the fragrance of this four-fold incense, just as Calvary was God's way of bringing out the fragrance of Jesus in its fulness (John 3:16, Luke 22:44). This incense was burned morning and evening in the tabernacle (Exodus 30:7-10).

The sweet savor of Christ is set forth in the incense burning, signifying what He was for us, what He did for us, and what He suffered for us. Why did this other angel, holding the golden censer, stand before the golden altar before the golden throne to offer incense with the prayers of all saints?

Why this demonstration? The answer: The whole action is called for because of the great body of saints on earth during the last half of the Great Tribulation . . . the time of the trumpet judgments. They need heavenly help . . . they must have help from Heaven . . . in this time of terrible, terrible tribulation. If the days were not shortened and if Heaven did not help them, there would be no flesh saved.

In Revelation 6:9-11, the souls of the saints who had been martyred were crying unto the Lord, but no provision for intercession was made for them. They were out of their suffering at that time. They were resting under the altar. They were told to rest a little longer, until their fellow servants would be killed as they had been. These saints who are praying and crying unto God in chapter eight are those “**other servants**” to whom God referred. The intercession of the angel with the censer shows the longsuffering of God toward man, even unto the end.

Verse 4 tells us that the smoke of the incense came with the prayers of the saints, and ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand - not out of the golden censer, but from the hand of the angel. This signifies even further that this angel was none other than the Lord’s eternal High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.

When the prayers of the saints and the incense from the censer have gone up to God out of the angel’s hand, the angel then takes the empty censer, goes again to the altar, fills the censer with fire from the altar - but there is no incense mixed with the fire! The incense was mixed with the prayers of all saints.

Verse 5 tells us that the angel filled the censer with fire from the altar and cast the fire into the earth.

Note: The incense and prayers went up to God, the fire was cast down upon the earth. There were voices, thunder and lightning, a great earthquake - and judgment, raw judgment, judgment in such fury as this earth has never known nor will know up to that moment, which is yet future and will occur during the last half of the Tribulation period. God is bringing to pass the redemption of all creation (Romans 8:22). “**The earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof.**” One day God will renovate this old earth a second time, removing every trace of evil and of the curse, and we will have one giant Paradise such as God placed Adam and Eve in when He created man.

When the angel took the censer, filled it with fire and cast the fire into the earth, the stage was set for complete catastrophe . . . voices in the sky, thunderings, lightnings, and a great earthquake. Immediately the seven angels prepared to sound their trumpets.

THE FIRST TRUMPET

Revelation 8:7:

7. The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

The first of the seven angels stepped into position, raised his trumpet, and the blast went forth.

Immediately, hail (chunks of ice), fire (yes, literal fire), and blood . . . not symbolic fire, not symbolic blood, but real ice, real fire and real blood . . . will fall from the sky upon the earth right here where you and I are today. One third of all the trees will perish, and all the green grass will be burned up. Can you picture a sight such as that?

If you find it difficult to believe that ice, fire and blood can come down out of the sky upon the earth, read Exodus 9:18-25, and remember that God Almighty changes not! He is the same, yesterday, today and forever.

Dear reader, let your imagination run completely wild. Look up into the sky. Can you imagine blazes of fire, streams of blood and great chunks of ice falling down upon the earth? Look across the mountains (if you live in the mountains). From where I sit dictating this message, I can see a small mountain, and on clear days I can see the range of the Blue Ridge Mountains, covered with trees. Look across the hills. Can you imagine all the trees blazing, burning, going up in smoke - and the grass being burned to a crisp? People will be screaming, running, begging, falling over each other. The hail will beat upon their heads; they will be spattered with blood.

Did I hear you say, "Mr. Greene, I do not believe in that kind of God"? My friend, what you believe does not matter. What you think does not matter. What you may have heard from the lips of some preacher makes no difference. The terrible judgment of blood, ice and fire will be rained upon this earth when the angel sounds the first trumpet.

Some precious people who read these lines have storm shelters. Some have bomb shelters. I am not criticizing anyone who has either of these protective shelters; but if you run to the storm shelter when a tornado is coming . . . if storms scare you . . . if the thought of an atomic war frightens you - then dear friend, think of this: There will be no hiding place, there will be no escape, when God's wrath is let loose!

After the Rapture has occurred, after the saints of God have been caught up to meet Jesus in the air, one day the radio and television networks of the world will send out an announcement such as this: "Ladies and gentlemen, the sky looks very queer. The elements are extremely hot. In some sections it is reported that fire and ice mingled with a sticky red substance (some say it is blood) are falling upon the earth. Scientists, chemists, astrologers, and weathermen are baffled. No one seems to understand the cause of this terrible deluge of ice, fire and blood. Stand by for later information as we receive it."

I know some of you think that what I have just said is fantastic, foolish, and out of all reason. But if you go on in your sins as some of you are doing, if you ignore God and pay no attention to the call of the Holy Spirit - one of these days you will be convinced that these "fantastic" events are coming to pass!! If I cannot convince you; if God's Word cannot convince you - then God Almighty WILL convince you. It is not my business to force you into accepting Christ - but it is my business to warn you of the wrath of God to come. "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ**" right now - and God will save you!

THE SECOND TRUMPET

Revelation 8:8-9:

8. And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

9. And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

The Bible is true in every minute detail. It is verbally inspired. The Holy Spirit is careful to point out here that this is not a literal mountain - but “**as it were**” a great mountain.

In other words, we can understand how it looked when we think of a giant mountain falling into the sea. What John actually saw was no doubt an immense meteoric mass, ablaze with fire. God simply turned loose one of the giant meteors and it plunged to earth in a blaze. The verse says, “**The sea became as blood**” (notice - sea, not seas), probably referring to the Mediterranean sea, because Israel is back in her own land at this time, the Antichrist will be reigning from Jerusalem and the center of all these judgments will be upon the land of Israel.

They will reach to the four corners of the earth, but will be most severe in the land of Israel. When this great burning mass fell into the sea, it turned a third part of the sea into blood.

Yes, the water became blood - not symbolic blood, just plain blood! If you doubt that water could be changed into pure blood, read concerning the first Egyptian plague when Pharaoh rebelled against God (Exodus 7:19-21). Read the account where God turned the waters of the Nile into blood: “**And all the waters that were in the river were turned into blood. And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.**”

The only difference between this first Egyptian plague and the effect on the sea by the falling of the burning mass, is that only one-third of the sea shall become blood when the burning mountain strikes.

Thus, only one-third of the living creatures shall die.

Also one-third of the ships shall be destroyed. This will possibly occur by means of a giant tidal wave when the burning mountain falls into the sea. Think of it! (It was a giant storm that destroyed the Spanish Armada.)

THE THIRD TRUMPET

Revelation 8:10-11:

10. And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters:

11. And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

Note the words “**burning as it were a lamp.**” Here, John uses a lamp to illustrate the tremendous burning light that fell from the sky, as he used the mountain to illustrate the burning mass under the second trumpet.

When the third trumpet sounded, John saw a great star fall from Heaven, burning like a giant torch. No doubt this will be another heavenly body - a meteor or such like - that God turns loose; and as it falls it will assume the form of a giant torch, in its blazing path down through the heavens as it speeds toward earth at an unknown rate of speed. When the gaseous vapors are scattered throughout the atmosphere, and these vapors explode, they will be absorbed by the waters - and a third of the rivers and fountains of water will be poisoned by the gasses from this burning torch. The waters will be made very bitter. Many men shall die from drinking the poisoned water. “**Wormwood**” is a perennial herb, extremely bitter used in the manufacture of absinthe, which is used in France as a beverage, and is much more intoxicating and destructive to the human body than ordinary liquors known in America.

This time of judgment is foretold by the prophet, Jeremiah: “**Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, even this people** (the people Israel), **WITH WORMWOOD, AND GIVE THEM WATER OF GALL TO DRINK**” (Jeremiah 9:15).

Thank God I will not be here . . . YOU do not have to be here . . . you can be saved if you are not saved now; and if you are born again now you have nothing to fear or dread, for you will not be here. The born again will be seated at the marriage supper in the sky when these terrible judgments occur (Revelation 19:7-10).

THE FOURTH TRUMPET

Revelation 8:12-13:

12. And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

13. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

In Daniel 4:26 we learn that the Heaven rules. Here when the fourth angel sends out the trumpet blast, a third part of the sun is smitten, a third part of the moon is smitten, a third part of the stars are smitten, a third part of the day is blacked out - and the night likewise.

That means that a third part of daylight will be blacked out around the world. In this present time, when it is light here in the United States, it is dark in China; when it is light in China, it is dark here in the United States. But when the fourth trumpet sounds it will be dark a third part of the Chinese day and a third part of the American day, proving that Heaven does rule and that God controls the affairs of Heaven and earth. In Luke’s Gospel we read, “**There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken**” (Luke 21:25,26).

Eight centuries before the birth of Jesus, God spoke to Joel and gave to him a picture of the plagues that will accompany the day of the Lord. Read these verses and tremble, if you are not born again. Read them and rejoice if you ARE saved, that you will not be here when these things come to pass. And then do your best to get every sinner saved that you possibly can!

“Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come. Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God? The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered. How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. O Lord, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field. The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them.

“The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array. Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness. They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks: Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded. They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief. The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: And the Lord shall utter His voice before His army: for His camp is very great: for He is strong that executeth His word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?” (Joel 1:15-2:11).

These things are yet in the future, and if you are not saved it is possible you could be here when they happen.

A UNIVERSAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE THREE WOES

Verse 13: **“And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of Heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!”**

Notice: John says, "**I beheld... I heard.**" Both the eye and ear are engaged, signifying the careful attention and interest of the beloved disciple in the events which pass before him. The angel is flying through mid-heaven . . . the firmament. He can scan the entire earth, from its center to the most remote boundary of the universe. The triple cry of "**Woe! woe! woe!**" announces the most horrible judgments ever announced . . . judgments that are far beyond the imagination of man.

The "**woes**" are to be especially upon those who have their settled place of abode on the earth. Those who refuse to hear the solemn warnings from Heaven, and in spite of all the announcements of judgment cling to this earth as their home and their dwelling place, as if they would abide here forever. Such people are alive today.

The term "**inhabiters of the earth**" is used twice before, in chapter 3:10 and 6:10, referring to the peoples upon whom the Tribulation will come, and having to do with the Philadelphia believers and the souls under the altar. The souls under the altar were comforted by being assured that the inhabitants of earth would be judged when their brethren had been killed (during the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation).

This is a distinct and manifest class of people, spoken of in the term "dwellers on or inhabitants of" the earth.

It will be against this perverse, unbelieving class that these terrible woes of God will be directed, first against the Jews, second against the inhabitants of the Roman earth and empire, and last, it will reach to every square inch of the universe and will have to do with every person who inhabits the earth. This will be the final, the omega, of God's giant judgments of fury.

~ end of chapter 8 ~

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